

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 02992 281218Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 SY-05 ACDA-12 /089 W
-----011977 281320Z /50

R 281121Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7594
AMEMBASSY KABUL
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2992

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS SHUM IR
SUBJ: CIVIL DISORDERS: RUMORS, THREATS FLY AGAIN;

REF: TEHRAN 2926

SUMMARY: AMERICAN COMMUNITY CHURCH RECEIVED BOMB THREAT EARLY AFTERNOON MARCH 27 BUT NO BOMB FOUND. ASSYRIAN CHURCH AND ARMENIAN NEWSPAPER HAVE RECEIVED ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALLS PAST FEW DAYS SAYING EASTER IS "GOOD TIME TO KILL CHRISTIANS". ONE CALL MENTIONED APRIL 1 AS POSSIBLE DATE FOR ACTION. HOWEVER, MOSLEM RELIGIOUS LEADER HERE CALLED FOR QUIET. TERRORIST MENTIONED REFTTEL IDENTIFIED BUT HAD NO PREVIOUS POLITICAL RECORD. ENDSUMMARY.

1. ABOUT 1330 HOURS MARCH 27, PASTOR AMERICAN COMMUNITY CHURCH RECEIVED CALL FOR "AMERICAN MILITARY CHURCH"; WHEN HE TRIED TO EXPLAIN CHURCH WAS COMMUNITY AFFAIR, CALLER BROKE INTO TO THERE WAS BOMB IN BUILDING. AREA WAS CLEARED, AND SEARCH REVEALED NO BOMB. CHURCH AND OFFICES ARE BEING CLOSED FOR TWO DAYS AS PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE.

2. ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO, ST. THOMAS ASSYRIAN CHRISTIAN
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CHURCH IN TEHRAN WITH CONGREGATION OF ABOUT 2,000 MEMBERS RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL WHICH SAID EASTER WAS "GOOD TIME TO KILL CHRISTIANS". ASSYRIAN MINORITY MAJLES DEPUTY REPORTEDLY SAW SHAH ON MATTER AND WAS GIVEN REASSURANCES CHRISTIANS WOULD BE PROTECTED. THUS FAR, THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS.

3. CHRISTIAN ARMENIAN NEWSPAPER ALIK RECEIVED TWO ANONYMOUS CALLS IN SAME VEIN AS ASSYRIAN CHURCH, BUT SECOND ONE MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF ACTION AGAINST CHRISTAINS ON APRIL FIRST WHICH WAS SAID TO BE SOME KIND OF MARTYRS ANNIVERSARY. (COMMENT: CHECK OF OUR CALENDARS SHOWS NO RELIGIOUS OR TERRORIST ANNIVERSARY THAT WOULD FIT BILL). NOTHING HAS YET HAPPENED.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS, AND SITUATION FITS PATTERN OF RUMOR MILL TWO WEEKS AGO, WE ARE MAINTAINING CAREFUL WATCH ON SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT "SOMETHING" WILL TAKE PLACE OVER MARCH 30-APRIL 2 PERIOD. BEST CONTACTS WE HAVE IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY INDICATE MARCH 30 (40-DAY ANNIVERSARY AFTER TABRIZ RIOTS) WILL BE QUIET OCCASION. SENIOR MOSLEM LEADER AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI HAS CALLED FOR CLOSING OF SHOPS BUT FOR FAITHFUL TO REMAIN AT HOME TO AVOID PROVOKING OUTBURSTS. FOREING JOURNALIST SAYS WHOLE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP WANTS TO "KEEP LID ON" THIS TIME AND ARE MAKING MORE PREPARATIONS THAN BEFORE TO POLICE THEIR OWN GROUPS.

5. TERRORIST REPORTED KILLED IN ISFAHAN (REF A) IDENTIFIED AS ALI MIRABIAN, EX-MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL, REPORTEDLY DISMISSED BECAUSE OF ABSENTEEISM, EMBEZZLEMENT AND OTHER MISCONDUCT. WE HAVE NO INFORMA-
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TION THAT HE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY ACTIVE POLITICALLY.
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Message Attributes

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